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**GRANT AND EISENHOWER: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
THE SOLDIER TURNED POLITICAL LEADER**

BY

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GRANT AND EISENHOWER: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SOLDIER TURNED  
POLITICAL LEADER

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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The successes of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm have given the military a new image compared to the public's impression of our defense establishments capabilities and intentions following Vietnam. Senior military leaders who are credited with the recent successes are being referred to as possible political leaders in positions from the state to the highest national levels. This wave of high public confidence in military figures and an emotional enthusiasm for military style leadership in the political arena has occurred after past wars. Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight D. Eisenhower were swept into the U.S. Presidency after successes on the battlefield. Neither of these great generals had discernible political ambitions prior to their being drafted to political service. A review of their lives through biographical and autobiographical literature can give the modern soldier a clearer understanding of their importance to the overall political process of the nation. This information can also serve to awaken an individual interest in learning more about the political implications of military service.

## **SECTION I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

General George Washington said, "War must be carried on systematically, and to do it you must have ... Men of Character actuated by Principles of Honor" (1). Most military men are sensitive to General Washington's sentiment and see themselves as people of high character and principles. Our political institutions are also intended to be operated by people of high character and principles. It should not be a surprise then that the history of our nation contains examples of great soldiers who were first successful on the battlefield and then went on to important political office.

As a result of Operation Desert Storm, current events may be mirrored in events of the past. It is possible to read in popular news magazines and hear on television that among the generals of Desert Storm, one general would make a good state politician, another an exceptional Vice-President of the U.S. , still another might be just the person to run for President. It is also interesting to note that both the Republican and Democratic Parties hope to get these popular men to run on their side of the ballot; the generals have done a good job of staying politically neutral over the years.

In the months and years to come well known career soldiers from Desert Storm may be elected to prominent political office, as has happened to soldiers following earlier wars. FM 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, admonishes:

Whether they like it or not, senior leaders are on display at all times. Actions telegraph their true philosophy and must be consistent with what they say. Finally, the reactions of senior-level leaders to unforeseen events tell their organization and soldiers how they should act in similar situations. Thus, senior leaders cannot ignore the effect of their own behavior. They accept the obligation to be role models because they know that their personal and professional conduct does make a difference (2).

We may see in the near future, as we have in the past, that senior military leaders value political service as an extension of their military careers. This suggests that military professionals could profit from knowing as much about politics, and their place in it, as they do about the military art.

Studying the lives of great people is an excellent way of ascertaining facts and circumstances which led to their accomplishments, good or bad. The lessons one learns about these historical figures and their times can be objectively and

subjectively evaluated for current and future applicability. Many official military publications use highlights from the lives of great soldiers to illustrate a wide variety of professional attributes and as direct examples of military decision making. In many cases, the activities of a single great soldier on a single battlefield, winning (or losing) a single battle can be very instructive.

Taken separately, the lives of General Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight David Eisenhower provide excellent insight into how military men without political ambitions can be cast among the preeminent political figures of their day. It is not enough to review only a few key periods of their lives such as their greatest military successes or most difficult political challenges; the real lessons are to be learned by an overview of their entire lives so any accomplishments appear in a reasonable context.

Grant and Eisenhower represent men from different generations, but who are contemporary enough so that the issues they faced are readily understandable by modern soldiers. The wars they fought and the political environment they found themselves in have been the subject of intense study in public and military schools so that it is not necessary, considering the readership of this article, to give exhaustive treatment to the often studied aspects of their lives.

In this way, the comparative study of Grant and Eisenhower allows the reader

to see from which the character of the men came, and, why they would have accepted a political role after long and trying military service. Additionally, it can show how military leaders translate their military skills and attitudes into political policy.

This study is not intended to be a predictor of future successes or failures by soldiers turned politicians, but it should be viewed as a vehicle for increasing the appreciation serving military personnel have of the political process and the role soldiers can play in the political life of our country. As Bernard Brodie said, "Remembrance of things past is always an extremely important part of our present and of our expectations about the future" (3).



## **SECTION II**

### **U. S. Grant - The Accidental President**

**Grant's life was not a logical progression of ever increasing positions of responsibility, growing self-confidence, or identifiable personal qualities or values which portended greatness. His life seems to have been a series of disasters held together by strokes of luck, but it is worthy of study because it may show that at critical times in our nation's history soldiers have had to be ready to assume the mantle of political service. This may be the lesson which points out clearly why soldiers should study and learn the political basis of our country as thoroughly as they study military history, and develop a genuine appreciation for why our founding fathers created the separate powers.**

**Grant's life of accidental happenings got off to a fast start; it began at his birth when his name was selected by drawing lots. Born in 1822, Hiram Ulysses Grant experienced firsthand the rough life of the frontier in Ohio. His father was a leather tanner who expected Ulysses to help with the many chores which went along with the business. Fortunately, young Grant was healthy and active because by the time he turned eight years old his chores included driving a team of horses and helping at the local bark-mill. By the time he was ten years old, he was**

driving a team of horses from his home in Georgetown, Ohio, forty miles to Cincinnati, to bring back passengers.

Grant's early school and social life was not remarkable. His performance in academics was average and he was not known as a trouble maker. Friends and classmates remember him as extremely reserved, a favorite of the girls, and never attracted to the usual vices of young people of the time. He did nothing to stand out from his acquaintances.

Grant had a reputation as a hard worker who would finish a job diligently. It was said that about the time he was fifteen he had a superstition that to retreat was fatal, a characteristic that would play prominently in his generalship during the Civil War. The townspeople also used words such as resolute, trustworthy, and sturdy to describe his adolescent qualities. However, when his appointment to West Point was announced everyone was amazed. Some of the people laughed and others expressed indignation that the government would educate such a "clodpoll," a derisive term of the period. Grant may have agreed with this opinion since he never indicated he had a very high regard for himself. Additionally, he never exhibited much interest in the military, not even in the war stories of his relatives.

Getting selected for West Point precipitated another accident on him. The

congressman who nominated him for the Academy did not know Grant's middle name, but he knew his mother's maiden name was Simpson; therefore, he nominated Ulysses Simpson Grant. Grant accepted this name when the Academy Adjutant noted a U. S. Grant was appointed. Besides, Grant never liked his original name's initials - H.U.G. .

His years at West Point were ones of contrasts. He did well enough in his classes, especially mathematics, but showed no liking for military life. However, since he had accepted his appointment, he did his best to prepare for his military duties. Classmates recalled that he was very quiet and did not voluntarily voice many opinions, but he asked a million question and seemed to absorbed information like a sponge (4).

Grant's way of getting along with peers and superiors alike was to be quiet and unassuming. This may come in large part from his size which at the time was 5'6" and 117 pounds. His demerit sheets showed that he had no real conduct marks against him - most of the marks being for lateness. He had no bad habits and was seen as a good horseman and nice but not brilliant person.

Grant was also a person of modest ambitions. He says, "My idea was then to get through the course, secure a detail for a few years as assistant professor of mathematics at the Academy, and afterwards obtain a permanent position in some

respectable college; but circumstances always did shape my course different from my plans" (5). Here, even Grant seemed to admit the influence of accidental forces on his life.

It was said that Grant placed great value on personal integrity to the extent that he would never lie, even as a joke. This serious turn of mind was reflected in other areas of his demeanor, since most people saw him as silent, reflective, thoughtful, somber, etc., but not melancholy. He seemed to have total control over his emotions and be in a perpetual contemplative state. This somber personality, however, did not keep him from graduating from the Academy. In 1843, he graduated 21st out of 39 graduates (6).

Grant was the best horseman in his class and wanted a commission in the cavalry upon graduation, but no position was available. In what was another stroke of fate, the best horseman at West Point became an infantryman.

In his last year of school Grant had been reduced from sergeant to private because he failed at his sergeant duties. It can be truly said that he left West Point without having shown any outstanding military ability, or even basic leadership talent. Additionally, because of his reticent ways he had not developed friends or any other situation which he could call upon later in his career or life.

At this point it might be said that Grant had less military zeal than any other

officer in the Army. It was only his kind, gentle ways and hard work that made his men value his leadership. He was noted for asking his men to do their jobs, being sociable with them and never "...putting on the airs of a superior officer" (7).

There is no record that he ever lost his temper and he seemed to have enormous patience. Horace Porter, a member of his staff during the Civil War, would later write that during the entire war he only observed Grant lose his temper one time and that was when Grant saw a teamster beating his horse in the face (8).

Grant's experience in the War with Mexico gives the first insights into his underlying strengths. Having been assigned as regimental quartermaster, Grant could have spent all his time in camp. When the battles were in progress, however, Grant would ride to the front. Longstreet said, "You could not keep Grant out of battle" (9). Those who saw him remarked on the cool, detached way he conducted himself under fire; it was as if he was fearless and could ignore the storm of bullets. "Courage under fire" seems to be the standard way people described how he behaved.

Whiskey washed away all the promise Grant may have had at this point in his career. During the Mexican War he developed quite a taste for alcohol, chewing tobacco, and smoking. For awhile there was no evidence that his whiskey drinking would cause him a problem. However, the time he spent drinking and the degree of

his impairment gradually increased. He seemed genuinely surprised when he realized that his men considered him a "drunkard." Grant's commanding officer took notice of the fact that he "... fell so far under the influence of his insidious love for (whiskey)... "; he required Grant to sign a "Reform or Resign" letter to be used if Grant fell under the influence again. Grant's reaction was to resign rather than be under the further scrutiny of his superiors. Grant sent his resignation to Washington; it took effect in July, 1854.

The period of time Grant spent as a civilian before the Civil War could best be described as a tortuous episode in his life. Although he had no bad habits except his excessive drinking, he was not thought of very well by his neighbors. He was a kind person, but did not exhibit any talent for making money. He lacked other necessary talents, noted for not being able to "solicit, nor keep small affairs in order."

By the time he was 35 years old, he had failed at his military career, farming, and everything else he tried to do. His father-in-law would have nothing to do with him. Although he never lost his reputation among his acquaintances for being kind, considerate, and generous to a fault, he was also known to be sullen except when he had a chance to expound on large, abstract topics such as the question of secession and other political topics.

Over the years Grant was in the Army, his father had developed a substantial leather business. To help Grant earn money and redeem himself, his father offered him a clerk position in one of his shops in Galena, Illinois, with the promise of a partnership if he did well. The South's attack on Fort Sumter put an end to these plans and marked the beginning of Grant's rise to fame.

Grant was selected by his town to raise a company of volunteers to serve the State of Illinois. As a mustering officer he hoped that when the units were raised he would be given a command. It soon became apparent that politics would play a large part in the assignment of commands. Grant was desperate because he knew that he did not have any political power. The politicians characterized him as a "military dead-beat" and the people thought of him as a "decayed soldier." Both groups were not impressed with his appearance and knew of the trouble which caused him to resign from the Army.

Grant's chance came when the Governor of Illinois had problems getting a commander for the Seventh District Regiment. Because of the Seventh's indisciplined soldiers, several colonels had turned down the offer. Captain Grant's name is mentioned and the Governor said, "...; telegraph 'Colonel' Grant to come on." Colonel Grant quickly and effectively established his command authority over the Regiment. To increase discipline in the unit, he banned all liquor drinking.

Grant was promoted to Brigadier-General in the summer of 1861. He had come out of his depressions and was observed by all to be in his element as a commander. He set standards of conduct for his units that included putting a stop to all pillaging and a requirement to pay for anything that was taken. At this time Grant is also credited with turning Kentucky's sentiments toward the Union by his defense of Paducah. His statement to the citizens of Paducah about why it was important to defend the Union was recognized by Lincoln and caused an editor to write, "Just men like General Grant can put down this rebellion; vindictive men never can" (10). His name was finally receiving recognition throughout the North.

Grant knew the power of being victorious and used it for all it was worth. When victorious in the capture of Fort Donelson, his letter to General Buckner read: "... No terms except immediate and unconditional surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works" (11). He saw that this victory could open the whole South to capture; the citizens developed a certain confidence in his ability to win battles.

As a strategic leader Grant very much kept his own council. He wrote his own dispatches and for sure made his own decisions. This does not mean he lacked input from his staff, just that he listened and then made up his own mind instead of changing a plan provided to him by his staff. This approach seemed to add an



element of spontaneity to his movements on the battlefield. The basis for most of his decisions was never to retreat.

Without a doubt Grant was accomplishing great feats on the battlefield. He captured Vicksburg and freed Chattanooga. These victories advanced the Union cause at such a pace that a law was passed in Congress making him the first Lieutenant-General since George Washington and the Commander in Chief of the armies. Grant was clearly getting much political attention at this point, but it was based solely on his battlefield accomplishments, significantly, not on his vision beyond the fields of battle. He remained at heart the shy, quiet, average man who just wanted to put down the rebellion.

Grant must have known the realities of politics as they played on the military. By the time of the battle for Petersburg, Virginia, Grant wanted to relieve General Benjamin F. Butler because he felt him inadequate as a military man. Grant went so far as to issue a relief order on General Butler, but later rescinded the order. There is much speculation on why Butler was not relieved. Since Grant does not treat this issue in his memoirs, some experts feel that because Butler was a powerful Democratic politician, Grant wanted to spare Lincoln a vocal critic at a time when Lincoln's reelection was not sure (12).

The war wound rapidly to an end with Grant the overriding hero. His

magnanimous gestures to the southern soldiers upon Lee's surrender included letting them keep their horses to use in reestablishing their farms. He also directed the northern troops not to humiliate their former enemies because they were fellow citizens again. However, I doubt that this was done out of a sense of vision for a united country, it seemed to be more a sense of Grant's desire to play fair. This carried through immediately after Lincoln's assassination when President Andrew Johnson wanted to extract retribution from the South. In a meeting with "Radical Senators" from the north, including Senators Stevens, Wade, and Chandler, his initial attitude was best expressed in his statement, "Rape is a crime; treason is a crime and crime must be punished. Treason must be made infamous and traitors must be impoverished" (13). Grant took a strong stance that, "The people of the North do not want to inflict torture upon the South" (14). Within months Johnson's attitude had changed completely and he lost all of his vindictiveness toward the South. (Note: This change in his attitude precipitated an unsuccessful impeachment movement against him by radical northern senators.) However, Grant's early and forceful stand on this issue resulted in treason indictments against Generals Lee and Johnston being dropped forever.

Grant's move into politics was a casual slide rather than a deliberate decision on his part. Even after all his successes in war, he still did not have plans or

ambitions beyond the immediate present. For a time he was embroiled in a political fray and became both General of the Army and the Secretary of War. He tried his best to stay neutral while carrying out both of these duties. His instructions to his district commanders were clear, "You are to prevent conflict. Your mission is to preserve peace, and not take sides in political differences.... The military cannot be made use of to defeat the executive of a state in enforcing the laws of a state" (15 ). His approach again was to stay in strict accord with the laws of the land.

On May 20 1868, Grant was nominated unanimously as the Republican candidate for President. There was no credible opposition to him because of his immense popularity. Grant himself took no part in his own campaign. He felt that since he had not asked for the job, he had no obligation to work for it. His sentiment was, "If the people wish to make me President they will do so" (16). The people elected him without really knowing him.

Grant ran the government just as he had run his life, by happenstance. Along with filling significant government jobs with relatives and friends, he was doing everything in the same simple manner as he had handled affairs all his life. This included his unsuspecting attitude which allowed him to accept gifts which he would have been better advised to refuse. However, Grant's presidency seemed to

be in the grip of "cronyism." He either did not care or know about this situation. What was sure was that he was surrounded by a group of people who were not interested in any patriotic ideals. Maybe this was not unusual since Grant was not noted for being greatly concerned with a grand vision for the country. To the end, Grant never seemed to see beyond the next battle.

Grant's last years were as haphazard as all the rest, including his financial schemes. He lost almost everything he owned by being conned in a Wall Street scam organized by Ferdinand Ward. His bad luck continued when a pension fund set up for him by friends became worthless, leaving him practically penniless in his last years. Grant spent his final days literally writing his memoirs by hand in order to provide for his wife's welfare.

General Grant died 22 July 1885.

### **SECTION III**

#### **Ike - Soldier to President**

**On 14 October 1890, David Dwight (later reversed to Dwight David) Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas. He began life at the end of the frontier epoch in our history and lived to become a general who would guide us through our greatest military victories, bringing an end to World War II only to continue to serve his country as its thirty-fourth president. What were the elements of his personality and training which portended such lofty military and political achievements?**

**Eisenhower, or "Ike" as he was to be known affectionately, was born into a family of modest means. In his earliest years he was given hand-me-down clothes to wear and often went barefooted. Typically for children in families where every penny went to the necessities, Ike often went without commercially made toys and extra candy. As he grew he developed a love for the activities which all children of that era could pursue. Ike loved hunting and fishing and sports which tested his physical abilities. These activities were a good outlet for the energy he had shown since he was a very young person known for some episodes of wild**

behavior and even violent rages.

Over the period of his early life, Ike could be said to be typical for the surroundings in which he was reared. His family was religious, especially his mother. This melded with his experiences outside the family since in his community the churches provided for the social life and exerted influence in almost every other local activity as well.

Ike would say of himself in later years that he was "...just folks. I come from the people, the ordinary people" (17). In many ways he seemed to need to think of himself as ordinary even though he exhibited a stubborn, feisty nature which, coupled with his mental and physical talents, allowed him to excel. At the same time, he needed to be part of a team and accepted by his peers. This latter trait seemed to rise out of his inherently gregarious nature, and found expression in the activities he enjoyed at home and in the community. His desire to be part of a successful team would be a strong motive through his life.

Ike did not value scholarship for its own sake. However, he had a real sense of duty to his schooling and displayed considerable ability. He was cited by both his classmates and professors as having a phenomenal ability to master facts and dates. This is probably why two of his best subjects were mathematics and history. Some of his friends even predicted that he would wind up as a professor

of history at Yale. Throughout his schooling he was noted as having a "...logical and retentive memory (which) allowed him to achieve maximum results with minimum effort" (18).

All this ability did not mean he wanted to enter politics or the military. At this point in his life he was committed to financially helping his older brother get through one year of the University of Michigan; his brother was to return the favor the next year. This arrangement collapsed and Ike was talked into applying for the Naval Academy by a close friend. In one of those great flukes in history, Ike qualified second on the tests which meant that the person who got first went to the Naval Academy leaving Ike with the opening for West Point.

What did Ike expect to get out of the military? Without a doubt Ike was eager to do something which allowed him to be independent. He had already rejected the strict moral upbringing of his early years and expressed a strong need to be independent by beginning to smoke, drink, gamble, and swear. All his life he had also been enthralled with the west and the "thrills of the frontier" with opportunities for individual enterprise and bravery in the face of danger. The military seemed to offer an ideal opportunity to fulfill these dreams.

Although going into the military was a change of plans, West Point represented to Ike a great personal awakening to the importance of the military and

its political basis. When he entered the Academy he was still growing and maturing. He had a powerful, athletic body and a consuming desire to play football, not unusual for outgoing young men who possessed a great deal of self-confidence, as Ike did (19). However, the induction ritual at West Point made a tremendous impression on him. It must have been a combination of the new uniforms, the martial music, cadets on parade, and most certainly the oath of allegiance, which left him with a deep sense of responsibility to his country and caused him to say, "Suddenly the flag itself meant something" (20,21).

Life at West Point was austere and difficult for the lower classmen. Ike accepted his lot, but bent and broke the rules when he felt he could get away with it. In fact, the demerit reports show him to have been consistently in trouble for major and minor infractions. In one instance, he was demoted from cadet sergeant to private for his conduct at a cadet social event. In 1915, out of a graduating class of 164, Ike graduated 125th in conduct and 61st overall.

Ike tried hard to manage his own career. Eager to go overseas, he wrote the War Department so often that he got an official reprimand. By 1918, Ike had been given the temporary rank of lieutenant colonel. But when the Army began to draw down in 1920, he was reduced to the rank of captain. Promotion to major followed rather quickly, though the prospects for further promotions in the foreseeable



future were not bright. It can be said that Ike's dedication to duty did not waiver during this period because he continued to perform at a very high level and was given responsible assignments.

It was during the period 1919 to 1920 that Ike may have given his first inklings as a military visionary. Although he had not gotten combat experience in WWI, he saw the possibilities for tanks on future battlefields. While at Fort Benning, he and Major George C. Patton, Jr., explored the development and employment of the tank. However, regardless of the visionary application of the tank Ike helped describe, his bosses did not favor further development. Ike insisted and was threatened with court-martial if he did not adopt his superiors' views. His vision turned to frustration.

Ike's personal qualities sharpened in focus during the 1920's and 1930's when he had command and a variety of important staff jobs. He proved to be a disciplined student of the military art, very practical in his approach to issues. He was not intuitive, preferring to rely on study and experience. From the experience of the Army in WWI and his own background, Ike evolved the view that military glory, in and of itself, was never worth the cost on the battlefield. He was not given to great shows of emotion; in fact, he seemed to be suspicious of those who did. Ike believed in the concept of the team and went to great lengths

to insure harmonious interactions between all his men, personally relying on tact as a way of engendering cooperation. He liked handling troops and was thought of by his men as a hard working, tough officer who could be tolerant and humane.

Ike was skeptical of military genius as a means of insuring success. He preferred, instead, the concept of teamwork to deliver sustained success over time. Ike did, however, believe in hard work to achieve personal excellence. This belief in personal excellence allowed him to graduate first in his Command and General Staff College class.

Ike's brilliance as a military thinker and excellent analytical talent was noted by many throughout the Army prior to 1940. He had done an analysis of the Army's readiness to meet aggression throughout the world and concluded that we were not ready at all. President Hoover's staff rejected the report at the time; however, in light of the beginning of WWII it proved to be accurate and useful. General MacArthur wrote in Ike's efficiency report, "This is the best officer in the Army..." (22). Because of his talents, he could deal flexibly with any situation; with his vision he was not tied to any established practice.

Ike had the opportunity to get out of the Army in 1935. He was offered a job as a journalist at \$15,000 per year compared to his major's pay of \$3,000 a year. Sensing that a war might start soon, he stayed to do his duty.

Ike was maturing as a military man of vision and conviction. In 1939, he became known as "Alarmist Ike" because of his sureness that we would get into a war in Europe. In fairness, however, he did not see the war with Japan coming.

All of his life Ike had believed in and worked hard to bring success out of the diverse efforts of a team. As he rose in rank and responsibility, his idea of how big his team was expanded proportionally. I feel it is fair to say that Ike believed everyone under him in the military hierarchy was on his "team" and that he saw his team as part of a bigger combined effort eventually encompassing the entire nation. As a general, many of his achievements were to be based on his efforts to establish and promote the allied team. The examples are many. He moved the American headquarters in London to a location where they could live together "like a football team." He made a "crusade" out of allied unity. He went to great lengths to exercise his considerable personal charm rather than the authority of his rank or position. On the other hand, he fully realized his role as allied commander and refused to give up his total authority and become a figurehead. This was especially important in his dealings with British Field Marshal Montgomery which tested his patience to the limits. However, he endured "Monte" for the good of the Alliance.

Ike's successes as a general were due in large part to the human qualities he

had developed over his lifetime. These qualities inspired great personal loyalties to him in spite of the fact he admitted to having a hot temper and disagreeable temperament. In his military ability he was careful, orthodox, and uninspired. However, he studied and knew military fundamentals and never violated them. This may be the secret to his greatest military successes.

Ike believed that a soldier should not develop political ambitions while in uniform. Following WWII, as Army Chief of Staff, he was very careful to be openly loyal to Truman, his Commander in Chief. In private he never allowed anyone to believe that his public stance meant agreement with Truman's handling of the numerous problems which faced the U.S. after the war. It was not obvious that Ike wanted a political career at this time, an attitude which seemed confirmed when he retired and assumed the Presidency of Columbia University in 1948. It actually turned out to be more than an attitude, it was a dearly held belief and prompted him to refuse any admission of political intent which he said would almost be a violation of his oath of office.

In 1951, Truman designated Ike as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR). This position confirmed Ike in the minds of many Americans as a statesman, leader and favorite son. Although Ike's mind may not have been on politics, his name was on the minds of many influential Republican backers and

throughout the general populace. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., even entered Ike's name in the 1952 New Hampshire primary without his approval. Ike commented then that he would never resign his military duties to accept a political nomination. He made the statement, "At the risk of appearing pontifical, I can only abide by my hope of doing my duty - as quickly as my political future is removed from the category of duty and placed in the realm of personal ambition or desire, its automatic destruction is assured" (23).

Ike's emphasis on duty had permeated his entire career, from his early days at West Point which gave him an appreciation for the flag, through the great victories of WWII, to the commitments he made to be SACEUR. It is no surprise that before he entered politics he would have to be assured that it was his duty to serve. This occurred forcefully and drew on his strong instincts to be part of a winning team. Ike's friends were insistent that he run for president; he won the New Hampshire primary and got a significant number of write-in votes in Minnesota. His duty was clear and in May 1952 he declared his intention to seek the Republican nomination for President.

Ike campaigned as one who was naive of politics. To his friend Al Gruenther he wrote, "The life I lead now is made more difficult because of my complete strangeness in politics. Everything is calculated; the natural and the spontaneous

are frowned upon severely. All of this would be easier if I had any real personal ambition to be a political leader. The nearest I come to this is a burning desire to do my duty and be of service. This carries me through and keeps me plugging away and, I think, with some enthusiasm" (24).

Dwight Eisenhower the President was a direct extension of Eisenhower the soldier. His pattern of life and beliefs seemed to go on unchanged from the highpoints in his military career. As a soldier he was highly principled with a sensitivity to his oath and his relation to the Commander in Chief. As President, Ike professed a high respect for the office itself, an abiding belief in the separation of powers, and a conviction that he should never be guilty of going beyond the charter of his office as outlined in the constitution.

In the conduct of his office some people complained that he did not crusade for social issues and, therefore, lacked leadership. Nothing could be further from the truth, he simply felt these issues were beyond the constitutional limits of his office and that leadership in those areas belonged to congress.

Shades of Ike, the Supreme Allied Commander, are seen in the way he ran the White House. He had extraordinary personal administrative skills and insured his staff functioned efficiently. Not surprisingly, he did not like surprises from his staff and disapproved of anyone jumping channels to get to him.

Like other great soldiers, the strength of his leadership was in direct proportion to the strength of his convictions. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the way he relied on his six principles of power. The first principle was if you use power, use all the assets you need to solve the problem and assure yourself of success. Second, you should conserve power by being aware that you cannot militarily put down every second or third rate government that may threaten U.S. interests. Ike called this the "tyranny of the weak." Third, you must retain the choice of weapons by developing weapons advanced beyond what your enemy is capable of fielding. If you try to have a "flexible," capability you are in essence giving the enemy his choice of where to fight and what the weapons will be. Fourth, world opinion is a source of power because when a people believe in and value a cause they will give it their full support. This support is vital on the world stage because it preempts confrontations around the world relative to our interests. Fifth, a country's moral posture is a source of power if the policies it supports around the world are true to the principles of democracy and self-determination. Sixth, a strong legal position is a source of power. Insisting on a sound legal footing makes nations use international bodies such as the United Nations. This can promote dialogue or sanction overt actions (25). Students of history can find these elements in use when Ike decided to send forces to Lebanon

and in the reaction he had to our involvement in Indochina.

Ike believed totally in the rule of law and would never allow anyone in his administration to pick only those domestic or international laws which supported his position, while ignoring laws which would clearly speak against a recommendation. One has to wonder how the Bay of Pigs, Dominican intervention, and Vietnam would have turned out if Ike had been in charge or his principles adhered to by others.

Ike's vision of the military was the vision he had of how he would conduct himself as a political figure. This gave him an acceptance among the people of the country that weathered the problems which arose during his two terms as President. The people always saw him as honest, exactly the way he saw himself.

On 28 March 1969, Ike died.



## **SECTION IV**

### **CONCLUSION**

Without a doubt both Grant and Eisenhower were great soldiers on the battlefield. It is also easy to see that, as soldiers, they shared many common characteristics. Each graduated from West Point and was grounded in the Army doctrine of the day. They were able to comprehend the strategic nature of war and move their Armies through a series of victories to the final, unconditional surrender of their enemy. Neither had early ambitions of being a soldier, nor did they foresee that they would be called on to be one of the preeminent political figures of their respective generations.

Politics came to these men, as it may to the generals of Desert Storm, as a wave of public sentiment and emotion. My study of the lives of these men does not reveal specifically if they had any strong political motives themselves, it seems more likely that they could not resist the public adulation and feeling that if the people really wanted them to serve then they must do their duty - in exactly the same sense as doing their military duty to their country.

Grant's refusal to do any campaigning for his first term typified the loose way in which he had conducted most of his adult life and was a predictor of how he

would conduct the nation's business in both of his terms; a looseness that caused problems and corruption that he would never live down. Eisenhower's acceptance of the presidential nomination appeared to be based on his desire not to disappoint his friends; this was consistent with his desire to be part of a winning team, a strong personal motive throughout his life.

There is no evidence that, as soldiers, either men ever saw themselves or their military service as contributing to the political process of the country. Even today, when discussing historical perspective as a component of senior leadership, the Army avoids addressing the reality that when the nation has succeeded on the battlefield, its soldiers become a vital component of the political process (26).

I would suggest that while Grant and Eisenhower were elected president, many other soldiers succeeded at lesser political careers throughout the nation. This is a valuable dimension of military service which should be more prominently discussed in military literature. As Maurice Matloff writes, "For the military, in particular, history represents a broad foundation, a gemut of experience which can be drawn upon for education and development. As a source of wisdom and inspiration, and a record of alternative courses of action, history offers further interest to the military (27).

## ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-103, p. 17 (hereafter referred to as "FM 22-103").

2. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

3. Bernard Brodie, War & Politics, p. 227.

4. Hamlin Garland, Ulysses S. Grant, p. 28.

5. Ibid., p. 32.

6. W. E. Woodward, Meet General Grant, p. 51.

7. Garland, p. 111.

8. Woodward, p. 29.

9. Garland, p. 100.

10. Ibid., p. 182.

11. Ulysses S. Grant, Memoirs and Selected Letters, p. 208.

12. Woodward, pp. 346-347.

13. Ibid., p. 356.

14. Garland, pp. 332-333.

15. Ibid., 368.

16. Ibid., 383.

17. Piers Brendon, Ike: His Life & Times, p. 23.
18. Ibid. , p. 25.
19. Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, p. 42.
20. Ibid. , p. 44.
21. Brendon, p. 32.
22. Ibid. , p. 61.
23. Ibid. , p. 211.
24. Ibid. , p. 213.
25. Arthur Larson, Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew, pp. 83-106.
26. FM 22-103.
27. Russel F. Weigley, New Dimensions in Military History, p. 393.

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